

Washington, DC (April 16, 2012) – At 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April, 17, Pasco County Sheriff Chris Nocco will be testifying at a House Homeland Security Committee hearing to examine how emergency responders can be protected during an attack or disaster, specifically a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear emergency.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09) invited Nocco to speak on behalf of the first responder and law enforcement community.

"In light of the critical role that first responders will play during an emergency, we must plan accordingly to ensure that state, local and federal officials take proper precautions and remain safe during a disaster or attack," Bilirakis said. "Sheriff Nocco developed a great deal of emergency experience early in his career as a first responder during the 9/11 attack, the Washington, D.C. sniper incident, the anthrax attacks, and numerous demonstrations and large protests in the nation's Capital."

This is the third hearing in a series to examine the research, development, and acquisition of vital medical countermeasures and the plans to dispense and distribute those countermeasures in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attack.

Officials from the Department of Homeland Security, Department Health and Human Services, International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the International Association of Emergency Managers will testify as well.

Topics to be discussed include the status of a voluntary anthrax vaccination program and related guidance; deployment of home medical kits; and general support for vaccination efforts for first responders. Distribution and dispensing strategies that will involve first responders will be discussed to provide context for how first responders should be protected depending upon their unique roles.